

Ontario Youth Against Violence

Final Report

December 15, 2008

London Youth Council

Ontario Youth Against Violence
London, Ontario

Summary of Progress...1	Project Budget.....3	Project Team.....4
Future Work.....2	Forthcoming Report Date..... 4	

Summary of Progress

Beginning in early July, the London Youth Council engaged our community in sharing visions and strategies for ending youth violence. The first stage of the project involved gathering data and capturing the voices of London. The next involved continuing the discussion and expanding awareness of the issue of youth violence. We believe that the main work of the project is now complete and we have met all of the original requirements. There remain, however, some awareness and prevention strategies we plan on continuing into the next year, which we have detailed in the next section.

One of our first decisions was to prioritize working together with others in London. We asked many organizations and young Londoners to work with us to find effective responses and sustainable solutions for violence prevention in our community. We believe that it is youth themselves who can be the most proactive in promoting violence prevention strategies and violence awareness in London. The series of recommendations we presented were made in London, for London and with youth as the key stakeholders.

Our initiative focused on two sets of consultations. Firstly, 1091 young people in London and the surrounding area responded to a violence questionnaire we developed. The variety of opinions and the strength of the numbers meant there were many interesting implications to consider with the data. Secondly, the advice and expertise of many of London’s important agencies in youth work and violence prevention was represented in a series of interviews conducted.

Our Findings Report was the end result of these consultations. Many of the themes in both questionnaire results and agency interviews were developed into Recommendations for Change. We hope the document has captured the voice of young people in London and illustrated their wide field of views. We also hope our recommendations for change embody the wisdom and experience London’s youth and violence prevention agencies offered us. To date, the feedback on the document has been positive.

On November 6th, we held our organizations first Annual General Meeting. The date marked the one-year anniversary of our first meeting and the public release of our Findings Report. We reviewed our first year of work, with a specific focus on the Ontario Youth Against Violence project, and discussed some future initiatives. The event was attended by 25 community members - including Executive Directors, Program Directors, Youth Counselors, City of London representatives, as well as staff from the Advocate’s Office. The feedback during the event was very positive and many expressed their support of our group and how we carried out the OYAV project.

We then launched into a modest media campaign to highlight the release of our Findings Report. Details of our report made the headline for the Londoner - the second largest paper in our city. We were interviewed on Ontario Morning on CBC Radio One and the Local News segment of 106.9 X FM. We were also featured on London’s online newsource: LondonTopic.ca. This media attention served to strengthen our capacity to be the central location for discussion on violence prevention and centered attention around our Findings Report.

On November 27th, we hosted a Youth Anti-Violence Forum. The forum prioritized discussions, rather than presentations, and fully incorporated all 22 attendees into the event. We were joined by the Executive Director of a local violence prevention agency and the Research Chair of the University of Western Ontario’s

research centre for violence-related issues. The night's discussion was so engrossing that to give everyone a chance to comment, we were unable to get through all the material. The participants agreed to continue discussing their views on our questionnaire data, and re-schedule another night to discuss action steps. At the end of the night, in evaluations most "Strongly Agreed" that we prioritized discussion and "Agreed" that they are better able to bring ideas presented that night back to their group for further discussion. With two goals met, we have scheduled a second Youth Anti-Violence Forum on January 29th to complete our third and final goal.

Future Work

After gathering the information and creating some awareness, the London Youth Council is taking action upon the ideas raised. Using some key ideas presented in the Findings Report, we will continue to create awareness of this issue and enact some basic prevention strategies. Our belief that not all change must be big or governmental and even local or program-specific changes that follow the recommendations can make an impact. With this understanding, we do not try to act beyond our influence in these next steps, but will make the biggest change we can towards reducing youth violence.

Youth Anti-Violence Forum II

On January 29th, we will host a second Youth Anti-Violence Forum. The primary purpose of this event will be to discuss action steps for incorporating awareness and prevention strategies given in the Findings Report into programs or organizations of attendees. The community organizations in attendance will discuss ways they could use the strategies and their perceived roadblocks to success. We will encourage the other attendees to offer their advice to help reduce those roadblocks, and will use the funding allocated to Action Steps from the Forum towards allowing a group to implement a strategy.

The Action Steps was a specifically allocated item from the additional funding we received in November, which we have considered a "Project Extension". The second Forum was not planned or budgeted for originally, so we have allocated the expenses for that under the "Outreach" heading.

Outreach

Even before we received the Project Extension, we were working to book presentations with different community organizations and youth groups to share our Findings Report in an interactive way. With the additional resources, we plan on retaining a few presenters who can be rewarded for their time as well as printing more copies of the report. Our goal is to continue to book presentations into the Spring and hopefully encourage some other groups to implement an awareness or prevention strategy.

This was also a specifically allocated item as part of the "Project Extension" budget.

National Youth Week

One of the most prominent recommendations of the youth themselves was "activity". In a very direct way, we hope to implement this prevention strategy by trying to increase activity for youth as best we can.

During the first seven days of May, London will celebrate National Youth Week along with a growing number of other communities across Canada. The London Youth Council is organizing this growing community-wide coalition for the very first time and we think there are many valuable violence prevention opportunities in (1) promoting youth engagement, (2) expanding youth programming during the week, and (3) highlighting youth issues on a city-wide scale during the week.

We consider our work in organizing this week-long community initiative to be part of the Ontario Youth Against Violence project and have allocated part of our budget towards it.

Maintenance of the London Youth Council

To continue to grow as a leader in coordinating youth initiatives and presenting a unified youth voice, we think it is important the London Youth Council continue to develop. We have plans to incorporate and receive charitable status in the next year to further legitimize ourselves as a reliable organization. The work above underscores the importance of continuing our own operations. The London Youth Council needs to grow and be seen as a leader in city-wide youth engagement if our efforts on the project are to be successful.

We consider our organizations own development and future violence prevention efforts to be part of the Ontario Youth Against Violence project and have allocated part of our budget towards it.

Project Budget

Ontario Youth Against Violence Project			
	<u>Item</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Actual to Date</u>
1	Project Coordinator I	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 2,700.00
2	Project Coordinator II	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 2,200.00
3	Report Coordinator I	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00
4	Report Coordinator II	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00
5	Coordinator Expenses	\$ 263.90	\$ 120.07
6	Printing of Report	\$ 222.37	\$ 222.37
7	Draw Prizes	\$ 496.94	\$ 496.94
8	YAV Forum Transportation	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
9	YAV Forum Booking	\$ 105.00	\$ 52.50
10	YAV Forum Food	\$ 311.79	\$ 311.79
11	YAV Forum Speakers Gifts	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
12	National Youth Week	\$ 1,000.00	
13	Maintenance of LYC	\$ 950.00	
14	Hosting Provincial Youth Organization Meeting	\$ 100.00	
	Total Expenditures:	\$ 10,050.00	\$ 7,803.67
Ontario Youth Against Violence Project Extension			
	<u>Item</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Actual to Date</u>
15	Outreach	\$ 645.00	
16	Youth Anti-Violence Forum II	\$ 105.00	
17	Food for YAFV II	\$ 250.00	
18	YAV Action Steps	\$ 500.00	
	Total Expenditures	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -

Itemized Details

- [1 - 4]: Our project budget prioritized employing youth as part of the engagement process. We were able to have up to four young people employed at once on the project. The Project Coordinators worked on the project from July to November and the Report Coordinators from October to November.
- [5]: Any driving / transportation costs, food required for longer meetings, or any other expenses incurred as a result of the project by the youth employees.
- [6]: The original, printing of our Findings Report. For our AGM, we printed 40 very high-quality and professional looking copies.
- [7]: Prizes offered to provide an incentive for participation in the questionnaire. An iPod Nano, Olympus Digital Camera, and two \$50 Gift Certificates for two London malls were drawn and the prizes have been accepted by the lucky youth.
- [8- 11]: For the Youth Anti-Violence Forum, we paid attendees' parking costs, brought in food, and bought Tim Horton's Gift Cards for our presenters. The space and AV equipment also had to be rented.
- [12 - 13, 15 -18]: The projected expenses of the work detailed in the previous section.
- [14]: Under the heading of Maintenance of the London Youth Council, we have allocated some funds for hosting a meeting of several local youth groups from the surrounding area interested in beginning a Provincial Youth Organization. If the project grows, the potential for the London Youth Council to reach more young people and enact further violence prevention strategies could be substantial.

Forthcoming Report Date

May 25, 2009 *Progress Update*

As we have included a number items in our project budget that will continue past the date of this report, we have scheduled a Progress Update when we believe we will be able to share the results of that work. If you require a different schedule, we are available to provide reports on our progress at your request.

Project Team

Over the course of the past six months, the London Youth Council has developed and implemented our version of the Ontario Youth Against Violence project. Through a unique partnership, the Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex supported us by accepting and dispersing the funds on our behalf, as well as providing advice and guidance on the project.

For the first five months of the project, youth received honourariums for weekly hours completed on the project as it was a very time-consuming period. As of today, all members of the team are voluntary and will only receive small honourariums for Outreach Presentations.

Originally, the London Youth Council created a subcommittee for the project. Serving as Chairperson of the subcommittee, Mike Ellis was involved in the Windsor meeting, helping to develop the direction of the province-wide initiative in its early stages. Serving as Project Advisor, Brenda Malott of the Children's Aid

Society of London & Middlesex initiated our involvement in the project and offered much guidance throughout. Serving as Project Coordinators, Tyler Chartrand and Lisa Carter developed the project and worked towards all the project's goals. Serving as Report Coordinators, Stephanie Howlett and Joanne Fearn worked to tabulate the questionnaire data and develop our Findings Report.

To date, Tyler, Stephanie, Joanne, and Brenda are all still active on the project.

Past & Present Project Team:

Tyler Chartrand	Lead Project Coordinator
Lisa Carter	Project Coordinator
Stephanie Howlett	Report Coordinator
Joanne Fearn	Report Coordinator
Mike Ellis	Chairperson
Brenda Malott	Project Advisor

About the London Youth Council

The London Youth Council is an independent, volunteer run, organization of youth (aged 13 to 24). All work is by youth, for youth. Our goal is to unite London's youth groups and speak with a unified voice on youth issues. To date, Ontario Youth Against Violence has been our largest project, but over the past year we have worked on a variety of initiatives to increase youth input and community development.

Our Key Visions & Priorities:

Unite: Building the sense of community amongst London's youth groups

Listen: Developing opportunities for youth to provide input; seeking out that input

Think Big: Providing a place to discuss city-wide issues; representing London on a larger scale

Our Mission:

The London Youth Council is a group of youth that represents the city, covering the different geographic areas as well as the unique and varied interests of each of our communities. By bringing together these communities and individuals we will represent a unified voice on issues that matter to youth.